

Brethren Evangelist

"I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life"—Jesus

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Editorial

Sloth

If people should lie in bed as long on week days as on Sunday, everyone would soon be bankrupt and the whole business world turned upside down. Not less disastrous to the spiritual life is it that parents are so notoriously negligent in many cases. Children are allowed to spend so much time in bed on Sunday morning that attendance at God's worship is practically out of the question for the whole family until the evening, and not always then. Where there is a will there is a way found to come to God's house and give him the first fruits of one's time on Sunday. Our churches would be full, free from debt, giving goodly sums to the support of missions to the heathen, if only the slothful Christians would rouse themselves. Slothfulness may cause the loss of the joys of God's everlasting Kingdom, just as irreparably as habitual indulgence in those sins which land men in jail.—Sel.

The Cross

The horrible barbarity of the Roman crucifixion, favorite capital punishment with those old world conquerors, was exalted into a premiership among barbarities when in the environs of Jerusalem Jesus of Nazareth was nailed to the cross, and died there in the sight of heaven and earth, and of the ages. Upon a canvas which was hung in the gallery of the world's thought these nineteen centuries, and which will hang there in its chief place for all the centuries yet to come, is painted this picture of a world's incredible infamy and cruelty, corrupt Gentile and bigoted Jew forgetting for the moment their mutual hates to howl in unison for the shedding of innocent blood.

Now when we look at this cross of Jesus in its revelation of God, we find, first, that it gives us God's estimate of sin. Every serious man ought to ask himself, does more or less frequently ask himself, what does God think of sin? It is infinitely worth while to make this effort, to put ourself into God's thought, and to see sin in the true, revealing light that beats upon it from the eternal throne. When we endeavor to do this, we recall the banishment from Eden; we think of the flood; we recount the destroying plagues of Egypt; we listen to the awful thunderings of Sinai; we read the sorrowful history of Israel's transgressions. All these things remind us vividly of that uncompromising righteousness that sitteth on the throne of the heavens. But

these judgments were upon sinners. Another spectacle arises on Calvary—the agony of a *sinless* One; and as the heavens grow black above the dying Son of God, a dreadful voice rolls ominously down the ages: If God spared not his own Son, will he spare the obdurate rebel, the impure, the guilty? If the doctrine of vicarious atonement is true, how dreadful is the argument against the unrepenting; if all the measures of divine wrath were poured out upon the Spotless One, because he, of his own free will, and in the boundless benevolence of infinite compassion, had for a moment assumed the sinner's place, what will be the fate of the unrepenting who persist in standing in their *own* place, in their *own* sin and guilt, rejecting the shelter of the atonement, and the renewing grace of God.

Again this cross shows us God's estimate of the possibilities of human nature. We fall too much in the habit of thinking mean thoughts and base thoughts of ourselves, and so we become mean and base, for "as a man thinketh, so is he." Now we are not making an argument against humility, for a wholesome humility is quite a different thing. We do not realize the splendid possibilities which lie in us, possibilities in the direction of culture, growth, purity, power, peace, triumph over self, and over the world of unfriendly environment about us. We do not realize that embryonic divinity which lies covered up and hidden beneath the grossness of our thoughts, and the groveling of our wingless aspirations. And so we live in the narrowest material limits, absorbed with this pleasure, or that gain, or the other vanity, and do not live either above or beyond the things that perish with the using. Indeed we are considered very worthy and respectable citizens if we do even so well as that, and fall not into beastliness and devilishness. But what is God's estimate of us? What thought of his do we see in this cross of Jesus? What destiny, what possibility, is this for which he pays so great a price? *Sons, heirs of God, heirs of glory!* Children of the resurrection, to be, in the eternal life, *equal with the angels*. A race of gods for whom he is building that transcendent city of pearls and gold. Is there anything mean in God's thought concerning us?

There are so many lessons in this cross, that thousands of volumes do not contain them all. But let us inquire: What is this cross, for we are to "take it up, and carry it, and how can we know that we are carrying it after the Master if we know not what it is? What then is it? "Mortify your members which are upon earth." "As Jesus suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind." "For he that soweth to the flesh shall reap corruption, but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." "For they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its